



Area Command

Last Update: 3/11/2015



Primary Focus Areas:

When the complexity or magnitude of the incident(s) exceeds capacity of the local unit(s), Area Command will:

- Manage Type 1, 2, and 3 Incident Management Teams (IMTs)
- Ensure span-of-control standards are understood and followed;
- Prioritize zones and/or incidents;
- Allocate critical resources;
- Coordinate complex aviation issues;
- Simplify data collection and reporting;



Primary Focus Areas:

- Provide strategic support to decision makers by collecting, evaluating, and interpreting information, and developing accurate, timely intelligence reports and other products as needed -
 - *MAC Groups;*
 - *Agency Administrators/Executives;*
 - *Geographic Area Coordination Centers/Groups*
 - *Emergency Operation Centers*
 - *Agency Operation Centers;*
 - *Joint Field Office (FEMA)*



Primary Focus Areas:

- But above all . . .

Ease the burden/impact on the local/host unit(s),

Add value,

Foster relationships,

&

Facilitate safe, effective, efficient operations.



Area Command

- **HISTORICALLY:**
 - Developed in the mid-80s by land management agencies
 - Deployed to provide over-arching command to large scale incidents or multiple large incidents within a geographic area
- **TODAY:**
 - Part of NIMS, DHS, and core ICS curriculum
 - Deployed by USCG, FEMA, state/local government, and internationally



Who's on Area Command?

A group of highly experienced Subject Matter Experts:

- Area Commander
- Assistant Area Commander Plans
- Assistant Area Commander Logistics
- Area Command Aviation Coordinator

- May also include:
 - Situation Unit Leader
 - Resource Unit Leader
 - Information Officer
 - Liaison Officer
 - Facilities Unit Leader
 - Incident Business Advisor
 - Trainees
 - What positions are missing?



Area Command

- Provides strategic leadership for Agency Administrators by:
 - Ensuring clarity of objectives;
 - Coordinating implementation of objectives and strategies for the incidents;
 - Setting priorities for the allocation of critical resources within the theater of operation;
 - Overseeing the daily battle-rhythm of the incident(s) to ensure continued progress is being made toward incident objectives;
 - Assuring safe air-space and aviation management;
 - Setting priorities among zones/incidents;
 - Identifying and allocating critical/scarce resources;



Area Command

- Provides strategic leadership for Agency Administrators by:
 - Assessing risk and providing mitigation directions or actions;
 - Ensuring logistical support is in-step with incident needs;
 - Collecting, compiling, and disseminating information;
 - Coordinate the zone/incident “glide-path”;
 - Ordering and releasing IMTs as appropriate;
 - In-briefing & out-briefing IMTs;
 - Managing transitions;
 - Completing IMT evaluations; and
 - Securing incident documentation package(s).



Area Command

- Provides strategic leadership for Agency Administrators by:
 - Shouldering risk management responsibilities
 - Reducing /simplifying complexity
 - Maintaining organizational certainty
 - Sharing assessment and decision duties
 - Insuring national cohesive strategy goals are identified and addressed
 - Landscapes
 - Communities
 - Response



Area Command

- AC's do not:
 - Interfere with IMT battle rhythm
 - Staff an Operations Section Chief position
 - Direct tactical operations
 - Prevent or slow AA and stakeholder interactions with IMT(s)



How is Authority Delegated?

- Direction to Area Command is provided through a Delegation of Authority (DOA), a Letter of Expectations (Leaders Intent), a Tasking Order (FEMA), or some other written instrument
- Regardless of how, direction is provided by:
 - ❖ Agency Administrator(s), and/or
 - ❖ Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)



Authority Having Jurisdiction?

- Regional Forester / Forest Supervisor
- Park or BIA Superintendent
- Refuge Manager
- Field Office / District Manager
- Tribal Chair
- State Forester
- County Judge / Sheriff
- Local Government Chief Executive
- Other Administrator(s) as appropriate



What can you expect?

- Area Command is an “asset” managed by NMAC BUT once assigned, works for the requesting Agency Administrator(s) and/or Authority Having Jurisdiction
- Self-contained small work unit
- Normally takes 24-36 hours to mobilize to the area once ordered



During First Operational Period

- AC will meet with the Agency Administrator(s) and key cooperators to:
 - ❖ determine expectations;
 - ❖ review existing strategy and objectives;
 - ❖ confirm reporting timeframes and other issues;
 - ❖ accept direction
- AC will contact each IMT to:
 - ❖ announce arrival and change of command (as appropriate);
 - ❖ review status; and
 - ❖ arrange to meet



First Meeting w/IMTs

- ICs & key staff –
 - Will occur as soon as can be scheduled (typically within first 24-36 hours);
 - Provides opportunity for the ICs to brief on their incident(s):
 - IMT strategy
 - Progress, challenges, opportunities
 - Review current maps, Incident Action Plans (IAPs), ICS-209's, etc
 - Provides opportunity for AC to validate existing priorities, strategy, objectives, set reporting standards, and/or adjust direction as appropriate



General Strategy for Area Command

Success =

- Reducing complexity and easing the burden on local unit(s)
- Managing incident(s) to achieve objectives in a safe, efficient, effective manner
- Managing transition, if needed, to the next stage of overall management:
 - Another AC Team;
 - Additional IMTs;
 - Another Type of IMT(s); and/or
 - Back to the local unit(s)



When to consider Area Command?

(Current and/or within 72-hours)

- Complex or multiple incidents are exceeding the normal span of control
- Long term incidents are taxing/diverting the AA(s) or AHJ away from other important business
- Fatigue is becoming a factor
- Multiple IMTs are in the same area/unit
- Prioritizing competing incidents is required
- Identification and allocation of critical resources is required



When to consider Area Command?

(Current and/or within 72-hours)

- There are escalating political, social, and informational issues and needs
- When the military, FEMA (including ESF4) or other entities are engaged that are outside the scope of experience of those involved.
- Incident reporting requirements are diverse, time-sensitive, and require consolidation and clarity
- Incident(s) are having difficulty achieving objective
- IMT's are uncertain as to strategy based upon competing interests and direction



When to consider Area Command?

(Current and/or within 72-hours)

- Growing safety issues and concerns (ie. near misses, fatalities, etc)
- The concept of “Theater of Operations” is present in the thinking, planning, and operational choices of decision makers.
- When an ‘incident within an incident’ event(s) severely impacts agency oversight
- Predicted significant events (i.e. weather, large public events, etc)

Questions?

